

Message Text

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45

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 IO-14 DRC-01 /122 W

----- 083443

R 110500Z JUL 74

FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2245

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMCONSUL BRISBANE BY POUCH

AMCONSUL PERTH BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L MELBOURNE 0808

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, AS

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH ROBERT HAWKE

SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR (ACCOMPANIED BY CONGEN BRAND, DCM HARROP AND LABATT MCHALE) HAD USEFUL TWO-HOUR TALK WITH ACTU PRESIDENT BOB HAWKE JULY 5. HAWKE DISCOUNTED SENATOR BROWN'S ATTACKS ON AMBASSADOR AS HAVING BEEN A COMPLETE FIZZLE. BOWEVER, CERTAIN ISSUES INVOLVED SUCH AS U.S. BASES AND MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS (MNC) REMAIN ALIVE AND COULD PROVE TROUBLESOME IF RAISED BY LESS DISREPUTABLE VOICES. END SUMMARY.

1. THANKING HAWKE FOR HIS QUICK INTERVENTION IN THE BROWN AFFAIR, AMBASSADOR ASKED FOR HIS REACTION TO WHOLE INCIDENT. HAWKE REPEATED HIS BELIEF THAT SENATOR BROWN HAD BEEN SOLD BAD LINE AND THAT PRIME MINISTER, WHILE SLOW OFF THE MARK, HAD CORRECTLY CHARACTERIZED BROWN'S CONDUCT. HE ADDED THAT WHILE NO ONE COULD BE EXPECTED, AND HE LEAST OF ALL, TO GIVE COMPLETE AGREEMENT WITH U.S. POLICY ON EVERY ISSUE, BROWN'S TYPE OF ATTACK WAS INTOLERABLE AND TOO EMOTIONAL AND WRONG TO BE USEFUL. HE RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER, THAT OTHER FORCES ARE AT
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WORK IN THE COMMUNITY IN TERMS OF OPPOSITION TO U.S. BASES

AND TO MNC'S AND HE RECKONED THAT THEY COULD PROVE AN ISSUE IN THE NEXT YEAR OR SO.

2. HAWKE SAID ISSUE WAS PROBABLY DEAD, BUT IF RAISED BY OPPOSITION THROUGH CENSURE MOTION, BROWN WOULD NOT BE SUPPORTED BY MORE THAN TWO OR THREE IN SENATE, AND WOULD HAVE LITTLE SUPPORT IN LOWER HOUSE. IN REPLY TO AMBASSADOR'S QUERY ABOUT PUBLIC REACTION, HAWKE THOUGHT EVEN STUDENTS WOULD NOT FALL FOR BROWN LINE AS THEY WERE NOW TOO POLITICALLY SOPHISTICATED FOR SUCH SCARE TACTICS.

3. ON QUESTION OF LABOR UNREST AND "FEAR OF UNEMPLOYMENT" HAWKE POINTED OUT THAT FULL EMPLOYMENT WAS LONG TIME NATIONAL COMMITMENT AND WAS NOT UNIQUE GOAL OF LABOR MOVEMENT. WHILE PEOPLE EXPECTED LOW UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AND HAD COME TO EXPECT IT EVER SINCE WARTIME ECONOMIC EXPANSION, THIS WAS MUCH MORE DANGEROUS AREA FOR WHITLAM GOVERNMENT THAN ANY OTHER. GOVERNMENT PLANNERS HAD FOR SOME TIME UNWISELY, IN HIS OPINION, FIGURED ON UNEMPLOYMENT AS INSTRUMENT IN FIGHT AGAINST INFLATION. HE GAVE ESTIMATE THAT NEW ELECTION WOULD TAKE PLACE WITHIN TWELVE MONTHS IF RATE OF INFLATION CONTINUED TO INCREASE AND IF UNEMPLOYMENT PASSED OR CLOSELY APPROACHED TWO PERCENT. WHILE HE EVIDENCED BELIEF THAT THESE TWO FACTORS COULD BE CONTROLLED, HE SAID THAT ELECTION WITHIN YEAR WAS DEFINITELY POSSIBLE. HE DIDN'T SHARE PRESS "OPTIMISM" THAT WHITLAM GOVERNMENT WOULD RUN FULL THREE YEAR TERM. OF COURSE, OPPOSITION COULD NOT WIN WITHOUT CURING ITS LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS NOR WITHOUT PROPOSING VIABLE ALTERNATIVE POLICIES. WHILE HAWKE DIDN'T OFFER ANY QUICK SOLUTIONS, HE DID STRESS THAT PROTECTING INTEREST OF WORKERS WAS FIRST OBJECTIVE OF TRADE UNION LEADERS, AND THIS WAS HIS PRIME CONCERN.

4. HAWKE SAID PRIME MINISTER HAS BEEN VERY COOPERATIVE IN PAST WEEKS, CALLING HAWKE FREQUENTLY, UNLIKE SITUATION PRIOR TO DOUBLE DISSOLUTION. HE AGAIN USED WORD "RUTHLESS" IN DESCRIBING WHITLAM, BUT IN ECONOMIC CONTEXT RATHER THAN IN POLITICAL AS IN HIS PAST USAGE.

5. AMBASSADOR'S CALL TOOK PLACE AT HAWKE HOME WHERE HE IS CONFIDENTIAL

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RESPONDING WELL TO TRACTION TREATMENT FOR BACK SPRAIN. HAWKE IS LOOKING FORWARD TO WASHINGTON VISIT AND HOPES TO KNOW SOON DETAILS OF APPOINTMENTS SCHEDULED.
BRAND

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, LEGISLATORS, ANTIAMERICAN, AMBASSADORS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, LABOR UNION OFFICIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: martinml
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MELBOU00808
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740185-0145
From: MELBOURNE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740758/aaaabxlu.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: martinml
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 JUL 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <26 FEB 2003 by martinml>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH ROBERT HAWKE SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR (ACCOMPANIED BY CONGEN BRAND, DCM HARROP
TAGS: ELAB, AS, US, ACTU-1, (GREEN, MARSHALL), (BROWN, WILLIAM), (HAWKE, ROBERT J)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005